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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
08/987,005	12/08/1997	MATHEW G. HOWELL	MICL:038	5721

7590 07/11/2003
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HOUSTON, TX 77024

EXAMINER

TUGBANG, ANTHONY D

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3729

DATE MAILED: 07/11/2003

32

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

08/987,005

Applicant(s)

HOWELL, MATHEW G.

Examiner

A. Dexter Tugbang

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 30 September 2002.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 5,7-10,15,16,19,22-24 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 5,7-10,15 and 16 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 22-24 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 19 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

1. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on 9/30/02 has been entered.
2. It is noted that the After Final Amendment filed 11/15/99 (Paper No. 10) was not entered. Therefore, Claims 8-10, 15 and 16 are still present and pending in the instant application. Additionally, Claim 19 is also still present and pending in the instant application.

Election/Restrictions

3. Restriction to one of the following inventions is required under 35 U.S.C. 121:
 - I. Claims 5, 7-10, 15 and 16, drawn to a method of determining a cable connection, classified in class 29, subclass 593.
 - II. Claims 22-24, drawn to a method of making a cable connection, classified in class 29, subclass 857.

The inventions are distinct, each from the other because of the following reasons:

4. Inventions of Groups II and I are related as combination and subcombination. Inventions in this relationship are distinct if it can be shown that (1) the combination as claimed does not require the particulars of the subcombination as claimed for patentability, and (2) that the subcombination has utility by itself or in other combinations (MPEP § 806.05(c)). In the instant

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case, the combination (Group II) as claimed does not require the particulars of the subcombination (Group I) as claimed because Group II does not require the particulars of determining if a port is to be used to connect the cable and if so, connecting the cable to the port. The subcombination has separate utility such as forming a cable connection without any need to determine if a port is to be used.

5. Because these inventions are distinct for the reasons given above and have acquired a separate status in the art because of their recognized divergent subject matter, restriction for examination purposes as indicated is proper.

6. Pending Claims 5, 7-10, 15 and 16 directed to an invention that is independent or distinct from the invention originally claimed (i.e. Claims 22-24) for the reasons set forth above.

Since applicant has received an action on the merits for the originally presented invention (Claims 22-24), this invention has been constructively elected by original presentation for prosecution on the merits. Accordingly, claims 5, 7-10, 15 and 16 have been withdrawn from consideration as being directed to a non-elected invention. See 37 CFR 1.142(b) and MPEP § 821.03.

Claim Objections

7. Claim 19 is objected to under 37 CFR 1.75(c), as being of improper dependent form for failing to further limit the subject matter of a previous claim. Applicant is required to cancel the claim(s), or amend the claim(s) to place the claim(s) in proper dependent form, or rewrite the claim(s) in independent form. Claim 19 depends from previously canceled Claim 18. Claim 19 has not been further treated on its merits.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

8. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

9. Claims 22-24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Neirinck et al 3,622,686.

Neirinck discloses a method comprising: mounting a tray (shown in Fig. 3), which includes a groove (chamber 14) defined by first and second longitudinal edges with the first edge (outer wall 10) being higher than the second edge (free edge 13); placing a cable 20 in the groove 14; and selectively routing the cable through a notch (opening 15) in the first edge and a notch (opening 16) in the second edge.

Regarding Claim 23, being that the second edge 13 has a lip portion (shown in Fig. 2), the second edge can be said to be “substantially orthogonal” with respect to the first edge 10.

Regarding Claim 24, the claimed “cover” is broadly read as the dash panel (at col. 1, lines 11-12) in the motor vehicle, in which the dash panel is placed over the groove as well as the cable to conceal both the cable and the groove.

Response to Arguments

10. Applicant's arguments with respect to Claims 22-24 (in Paper No. 26) have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

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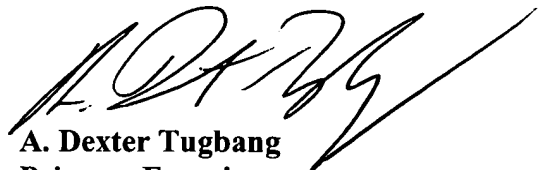
Conclusion

11. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to A. Dexter Tugbang whose telephone number is 703-308-7599.

The examiner can normally be reached on Monday - Friday 7:00 am - 3:30 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Peter Vo can be reached on 703-308-1789. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are 703-872-9302 for regular communications and 703-872-9303 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-308-0858.



**A. Dexter Tugbang
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3729**

July 9, 2003